

Japanese Fast Food— Quick, Reasonable, and Delicious

When traveling, you want to eat the local delicacies. Japan is perhaps most famous for sushi and sukiyaki, but they are fairly expensive, and you cannot eat expensively at every meal. But no need to worry! Plenty of other foods are available that are inexpensive and delicious. You can find approachable Japanese fast food restaurants around most major train stations and downtown areas. So without further ado, here are some of Japan's top must-try fast foods.

One of the quintessential Japanese fast foods is *gyudon*, “beef bowl.” There are many variations on the dish, but at its most basic, it consists of thinly sliced strips of beef and onions simmered until soft and served over rice. A bowl costs about \$4. Most places also provide pickled ginger as a condiment, free of charge. Restaurants usually offer many different toppings and combinations to choose from: get a set meal with miso soup and/or salad, or if you're more adventurous, try it with a raw egg! Choose different combinations to find your favorite. Big chain restaurants compete for customers by offering a wide range of *gyudon* choices that are fun to try and compare.

Japan also has a huge variety of noodle dishes such as soba and udon. East Japan is well known for soba, while the west is famous for udon, but many restaurants offer both. You can get a bowl for as low as \$3, and a wide variety of interesting toppings are available, from tempura to *wakame* (seaweed). Besides regular sit-down restaurants, small stand-up noodle bars can be found in most train stations and even on the platforms that are always packed with busy commuters. Give them a try when you take the train.

Of course, there is also the ever-popular ramen. Each region has its own variation: in Tokyo, ramen is usually flavored with soy sauce; in Hokkaido, miso is used; and in Kyushu, ramen is served in a savory pork broth called *tonkotsu*. Most ramen shops specialize in one type. A basic bowl of ramen will usually cost around \$5 to \$7.

Last but not least is a dish that has become so well loved that it could be called a “national dish” of Japan: curry rice. Curry rice is, as its name implies, curry served with rice. But Japanese curry has a flavor that is quite different from Indian or Middle Eastern curry. With its enticing flavor and aroma, it is something you should definitely put on your list of must-try foods. Curry rice starts at around \$5, and there are a variety of toppings you can add. The most popular is probably *katsu*-curry: curry rice topped with breaded, deep-fried pork cutlets. At some restaurants, you can choose the level of spiciness and the amount of rice, so you can customize your curry to your liking.

That concludes our introduction to inexpensive but delicious Japanese fast foods. Have a safe trip! Wait, what's that? You prefer takeout? Well, next time we will tell you about some great takeout dishes!



Gyudon, “beef bowl,” consisting of beef on rice, is a fast food standard in Japan. Depending on personal taste, you can eat it with raw egg, miso soup, salad, or a variety of toppings.



1	2	3
	4	5

1. With cheap and simple soba noodles, you can enjoy toppings from tempura to *wakame* (seaweed). 2. The flavor and presentation of ramen varies greatly from shop to shop. 3. Japanese curry is an everyday favorite. 4. Foreigners enjoying ramen. 5. Noodle shops inside stations may be “standing only,” or they may have seats inside.